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FREEMASONRY:

SKETCH OF ITS ORIGIN AND EARLY PROGRESS;
ITS MORAL AND POLITICAL TENDENCY.

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SKETCH OF ITS ORIGIN AND EARLY PROGRESS;
ITS MORAL AND POLITICAL TENDENCY.

. A LECTURE,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, CONNECTED WITH THE
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY,

ON THE 26TH MAY, 1862.

BY JAMES BURTON ROBERTSON, ESQ.,

Professor of Modern History and Geography in that University.

WITH APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

A SYNOPSIS OF THE PAPAL BULLS RESPECTING SECRET SOCIETIES

BY THE

REV. DR. MURRAY, OF MAYNOOTH.

DUBLIN:

JOHN F. FOWLER, 3 CROW STREET, DAME STREET.

LONDON: BURNS & LAMBERT, PORTMAN STREET.

1862.

Price One Shilling.

J. F. FOWLER, PRINTER.
3 CROW STREET, DAME STREET,
DUBLIN.

TO HIS GRACE
THE MOST REV. JOSEPH DIXON,

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH, PRIMATE OF ALL IRELAND, ETC., ETC.

MY DEAR LORD ARCHBISHOP,

In dedicating to your Grace the following Lecture, I have been influenced by motives of a public, as well as a personal nature.

In the first place, no Prelate, I think, in the United Kingdom is more alive than your Grace to the dangers threatening European society, or has combated with greater energy the demon of revolution, whether at home or abroad.

Secondly, our University, amid all the struggles of its infancy, has possessed no truer or more enlightened friend and protector than your Grace.

Then, as regards personal considerations, I wish here to record my deep sense of gratitude for the great kindness I have invariably experienced from your Grace, as well as for your encouragement of my humble labours in the Institution, with which I have the honour to be connected.

These public lectures form, I think, a special bond of sympathy between the professors and the students of our University, as well as between that University

and the public at large. The excellent youth, who frequent our halls, take an especial interest in the treatment of historical subjects; and the enlightened Catholic public of Dublin, like that of the Provinces, ever anxious to further the interests of religion and letters, have on many occasions given the kindest marks of encouragement not only to the lectures of the humble individual, who now addresses your Grace, but to those of his able colleagues.

In combating the religious and the social errors of secret societies, I am acting, I believe, in the spirit of the memorable address of the Prelates of Ireland, lately referred to by a very respectable Protestant member of the Dublin Corporation, and which bears the date of Thurles, 9th of September, 1850. In this address it is said "that the youth of Ireland shall, with God's blessing, be saved from the taint of a mischievous philosophy by a thoroughly Catholic education. And this is one of the grand objects of a Catholic University". And, again, the venerable Prelates declare, "In the revolutions which recently agitated the Continent, who were every where the apostles of rebellion, the standard-bearers of anarchy? Were they not students of colleges and universities, in which, according to the modern fashion, every thing is taught but religion? God forbid that so baneful a system should ever take root in our country.

"Should the sovereign of these realms ever have to

invoke the loyalty of the well-disposed against the designs of turbulent men, the youth brought up in a Catholic University would be found in the front rank of the defenders of order".*

A Christian University should carefully eschew the party politics of the day; but it should, at the same time, strenuously uphold and proclaim the eternal principles of social order. In other words, it should preach the Gospel in its integrity, and in all its applications, as determined by holy Church.

The important subject of the following Lecture I have endeavoured to discuss with the requisite moderation; and I have striven to reconcile the claims of charity with those of truth.

I beg leave here to tender my sincere thanks to the eminent Divine, who has had the kindness to furnish me with a valuable analysis of the Papal Bulls respecting Secret Societies. It will be found in the Appendix.

Begging your Grace's blessing on my labours,

I remain, my dear Lord Archbishop,

With many thanks,

Your Grace's most obedient and devoted servant,

THE AUTHOR.

Dublin, 8th July, 1862.

* See Address to the people of Ireland, p. 7, 8.

LECTURE ON FREEMASONRY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

In resuming these Public Lectures, which have been delayed longer than I could have wished, I had purposed to do for Portugal what I had already done for Spain, by tracing her history from the fifteenth century, down to the last War of Independence.

But revered members of the Irish clergy having requested me to treat of Secret Societies, which are now the curse and bane of European nations, I have begun with the venerable parent of all secret societies, the Masonic Order. But, before entering upon the subject, I wish to make a few preliminary remarks.

In the first place, our Protestant brethren, not being interdicted by the authorities in their different communions from becoming members of this society, incur not by such a step the same responsibility as Catholics who join it. In the second place, many excellent Catholics, on being made acquainted with the judgments of the Church on Freemasonry, have given up all connection with the Order. In the third place, there are in all countries, estimable individuals belonging to the lower degrees of Masonry, and who are not cognizant of its ultimate tendency, which I shall show to be anti-Christian and anti-social. And lastly, this remark is especially applicable to these three countries—England, Scotland, and Ireland, where Masonry has generally, but not always, retained a more innocuous character.

In our East and West India colonies, where hospitality is, as it were, a necessity of life, this society is

found to possess great attractions. And so, likewise, in that noble Profession of arms, where friendships are so warm and generous, this institution is thought to knit closer the ties of fellowship.

Thus an English or Irish Catholic young gentleman, finding, in Protestant England for example, Masonry in its lower grades comparatively harmless, proceeds to Belgium, expecting to find in that very Catholic country the order in a most satisfactory condition. Yet it is precisely because Belgium is such a Catholic country, that the bad elements of society there have settled in Masonic lodges. The depravity of those lodges may be estimated by a single fact. A few years ago, they were shameless enough to present a golden pen to the most infamous writer of the present age, the late M. Eugène Sue. So the English or Irish Catholic young gentleman, who has, as I have supposed, visited these Belgian lodges, will return to his country either disgusted with Masonry, or with his faith and morals ruined.

But it is time, after these preliminary remarks, to enter upon the subject.

As Freemasonry professes in its higher grades to restore what it calls the pure Religion of Nature; and again, as it promises under the specious names of "Liberty and Equality", to make men better and happier than Christianity has made them; it throws down the gauntlet on all the great problems of moral and social life. Whoever attempts, therefore, to oppose its pretensions, must take up the gauntlet it has thrown down.

Under these circumstances, I have been compelled to point out the nature of primitive religion, the defection of heathenism, and the relations of the celebrated Eleusinian Mysteries, from which Masonry claims to derive its system, both to the primitive Revelation on the one hand, and to paganism itself on the other. The appeal which this institution makes

to what it calls the more spiritual Judaism, is then examined.

Next, I give a rapid historic sketch of Masonry, showing how it evolved from the associations of architects in the middle age, till, in the times of the English Commonwealth, it assumed a political form. Then I trace its history from that period down to the middle of the last century, when it incurs the formal censures of the Church. Afterwards, I endeavour to justify the judgments of the Church in respect to all secret societies, and especially to those, who, like the higher Masons, the Illuminati, the Jacobins, and the Socialists, aim at a total religious and social revolution. I show how utterly inconsistent with the Christian revelation are the very pretensions of Masonry. Then I explain why so many estimable individuals, and some holding a high social position, were members of the Masonic Order. Afterwards, I show that a large portion of Masons in every country, and especially in this empire, as they occupied the lower grades of the Order, knew nothing of its ultimate tendencies. The dangers of Masonry, even to those in the inferior degrees, are then considered.

Next I analyze its constitution, and then its religious, and subsequently its political, doctrines.

Here occurs an episode on the Knights-Templars, in which I show how their history fits in to that of the Masonic Order. I prove how the corrupt tenets of the bad portion of the Templars perfectly correspond to those of the higher grades of Masonry. I then go off into an excursus on the social and intellectual blessings which the Catholic Church has actually conferred on mankind, compared with those which Masonry promised, but could never realize. I conclude with a comparison between the religious and political tenets of the deistical Masons, of the atheistical Illuminati and Jacobins, and of the pantheistic Socialists. Such is the wide field I purpose

to travel over to-night. I must most earnestly bespeak your indulgence, first, for detaining you so long; and secondly, for handling a subject which, I sincerely believe, my powers are unequal to.

My chief authorities are as follows:—

1. The Abbé Barruel's work, entitled *The Memoirs of Jacobinism*, the second volume of which is very full upon Masonry. In the thirty years preceding the French Revolution of 1789, the Abbé Barruel had by personal observation, as well as by research, ample opportunities of learning the principles and the working of the Masonic lodges. The first volume of this work was translated into English in the year 1796, and met with the approval of our illustrious Burke, who cites it in one of his last writings.

2. The main statements of Barruel are corroborated by the Protestant writer, Professor Robison, of Edinburgh, in a book entitled, *Proofs of a Conspiracy against all Religions and Governments in Europe*. This work was published in 1798, and dedicated to the great statesman and orator, Wyndham. Robison had originally been a Mason.

3. A manual of Masonry was published some years ago by the infidel bookseller, Richard Carlile. In this all the ceremonies, degrees, and instructions in Masonry are described.

4. A work on this subject appeared a few years ago from the pen of a German Protestant, M. Eckert, an advocate at Dresden. It is entitled, *Freemasonry considered in its true signification, or in its organization, its object, and its history*. This work, which I received but a few days ago, I have consulted only in certain portions, and in a French translation.*

I beg leave to observe, that it is only from published documents I have drawn the materials of this Lecture.

* This translation is from the pen of the Abbé Gyr, and was printed at Liège in 1854.

I now proceed to my subject.

Man, born to know and to love Eternal Truth, possesses an insatiable desire of knowledge. In his state of original justice, that desire of knowledge would have been one of the chief sources of his happiness; for it would have led him to study more and more the power, and the wisdom, and the goodness of his Maker. The contemplation of those divine attributes would have more and more enkindled his love; and the fervour of love would again have augmented the brightness of knowledge. Everywhere, whether in the clear, broad mirror of external nature, or in the depths of his own consciousness, or in the aspect of his fellow creatures, united among themselves, united with their God, or in the luminous tradition of truth handed down from one happy generation to another, —everywhere would man have then clearly discerned the image of his Creator. But at the fall, what a miserable change ensued! That noble desire of knowledge degenerated into an inordinate curiosity; the intellectual vision of God was obscured; and fear succeeded to love. Nature was now a broken mirror, that but half reflected the Deity. The senses and the appetites of man had revolted against his will; his will against his reason; and his reason against the law of his God. His conscience, laden with guilt, reluctantly acknowledged the force of that law, which it had violated; and his reason, confused, disordered, had forfeited the once bright intuition of divine things. So in that human consciousness, once so serene, so harmonious, all was now discord and perturbation. And if man looked around on his fellow-creatures, he saw beings as miserable as himself, and groaning under the penalty of the same guilt. And what had become of that glorious tradition of Eden, which, without the fall, would have been like a golden girdle, binding one generation after another to its God? Alas! that tradition now became a motley-

coloured, curiously-tangled web of primeval truth and poetic fiction.

Man, born to control nature, sank more and more under her dominion; and the wicked spirit, who had first seduced him to rebellion, sought to alienate him further and further from his Maker. Such is the origin of paganism. It is the most exact representation of fallen man. It shows him in his grandeur as well as in his abasement, in the struggles of the good and of the bad elements of his nature, in his aspirations after immortality, as in his downward tendency to Earth.

Hence, when the cultivated heathen examined the grounds of his religion, he found it a subject of perplexity. The dictates of reason—the pangs of conscience—the utterances of universal tradition—the voice of nature—all urged him to seek light, and solace, and expiation in the temple. But, unworthy and incoherent representations of the Deity, the sensual worship of nature, which derogated from the rights of God, and obscured and overlaid all the great truths of primitive religion, the contradictions and absurdities which the different systems of paganism exhibited, drove back the heathen from the temple with his reason perplexed, his conscience disturbed, his passions unchecked, the problem of existence imperfectly solved.

This condition of the heathen, happily, we cannot realize, because we live under a blessed Dispensation, where such moral discord is unknown. Christianity, (and I speak only of perfect or Catholic Christianity), Christianity is the religion of harmony. It is the religion of harmony; for it more than satisfies the reason, fills up the yearnings of the heart after happiness, enlightens the conscience, controls the passions, purifies and exalts the feelings, and mortifies the rebellious senses. That harmony we find in the close union between the new and the two

elder Dispensations, that had preceded, and foreshadowed, and prepared the way for the Christian. Harmony, ineffable harmony, we find between the different dogmas of that religion, as well as between its doctrines, its worship, and its discipline. Harmony, too, is manifest between its whole system, and the analogies of reason, the moral constitution of man, and the operations of external nature. Its history, too, presents the triumph of harmony; for it shows it solving one difficulty after another, overcoming all opposition, rising superior to persecution, shining out more luminous in its doctrines after the obscurations of heresy, and standing firmer and more compact in its evidences after the assaults of scepticism. Lastly, it is the religion of harmony; for by its sacramental ordinances, it reconciles man with his offended God, and so restores concord between his distracted faculties.

But, if Christianity be the religion of harmony, surely Paganism is the religion of dissonance. This dissonance we find between the primitive truths it had retained, and the errors it embraced. The same is manifest in the utter contradictions of its different systems—in the variations of the same system—in the radical differences of its Mysteries—in the opposite modes of worshipping the same divinity; for, as the Hindoos say, “there is a right-hand and a left-hand mode of worshipping the same deity”;—lastly, in the antagonism between its esoteric and exoteric, or public and private teaching. What a dissonance, too, between belief and practice! How often could paganism cry out with the Roman poet: “*Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*”. In a word, the moral and intellectual discord, which the sin of our first parents had introduced into the world, heathenism perpetuated and augmented. It was a strange world of flickering lights and shadows, wherein unregenerate man groped his way pain-

fully along. Hence the eagerness with which the cultivated heathen sought for a solution of his doubts, and for the moral guidance of his life; hence the ardour with which he sometimes questioned philosophy on the end of his existence, and on the truths that were to make him happy here and hereafter; hence the zeal with which he sought initiation in the mysteries, or secret rites. But philosophy, even the purest, is no substitute for religion. Philosophy at best defends religion; philosophy conducts to religion; but philosophy is not religion itself. Man, dependent on a Being to whom he owes his existence and his preservation, must needs have recourse to prayer; and man, conscious of having offended that great Being, must feel the need of expiatory sacrifice. *Ratiocination* is the life of philosophy. *Tradition*, resting on the authority of revelation, is the medium of religion. And observe, this holds good of all religions and of all philosophies, true or false. No philosopher ever claimed for his own system more than a human authority; and no religion (and this is especially true of the false religions of heathenism), but pretended to a divine origin and a divine mission. This pretension was of course false as regarded the errors of heathenism, but well-founded in respect to those truths it had borrowed from the primitive Revelation.

It is very remarkable that, while the history of ancient philosophy presents very few examples of moral conversions wrought by even its best systems, (such, for example, as that of Polemo, who by the study of Platonism was reclaimed from vice to a life of virtue); there are many testimonies of the ancients as to the very beneficial influence of the mysteries, and especially those of Eleusis, on the conduct of the initiated. These mysteries, had space permitted, I would have gladly described; but the abundance and the variety of matters I have to bring before

your notice this evening, preclude the possibility of such a description. Suffice it to say, that the main subject of celebration in these mysteries was the Myth of Demeter or Ceres, and of Persephone or Proserpine. And I may here observe, that the worship of these subterranean divinities had a more earnest and mystical import, than was usually found in the gay and voluptuous mythology of the Greeks.

The Myth of Ceres and Proserpine, represented in a succession of visions in the Eleusinian Mysteries, symbolized the institution of marriage and of agriculture, or property in its most concrete form—one the basis of social life, the other of human sustenance.

The myth symbolized also the decay and dissolution of the mortal body in the earth, and the rise of the soul to a better and immortal life. The kindled torch, too, which was passed from hand to hand, signified, perhaps, the successive phases in the eternal destiny of the soul.

The neophyte, first appearing clad in the skins of wild beasts, and then represented as casting them off, denoted the transition from savage to civilized life.

“The Mysteries of Eleusis”, says the profound German mythologist, Creuzer, “did not only teach resignation, but (as we see by the verses of the Homeric hymn to Ceres, sung on those occasions), they afforded consoling promises of a better futurity. ‘Happy is the mortal’, it is there said, ‘who hath been able to contemplate these grand scenes! But he who hath not taken part in these holy ceremonies, is for ever deprived of a like lot, even when death has drawn him down into its gloomy abodes’”. Creuzer adds, “It is conjectured (and rightly, in our opinion), that these verses of the Homeric songster were present to the mind of Sophocles, when, in lines preserved by Plutarch, he exclaims: ‘Thrice blessed those mortals who, after having witnessed these sacred mysteries, descend to Hades. For them alone that

abode is one of life; to the others it is full of misery". And with these lines of Sophocles may be compared the following verses of Pindar, preserved by the learned Greek father, Clemens Alexandrinus, and which, as he tells us, were in reference to the Eleusinian mysteries. "Happy he", says the lyric poet, "who after having beheld those ceremonies, descends into the depths of the Earth. He knows the *end* of life; he knows the *beginning* given by Jove". Pindar here alludes to the second birth, or the new life beyond the tomb. These hymns served to explain to the neophytes of Eleusis the purport of the popular myths, and the nature of the visions brought before their eyes. But, in the lesser mysteries, which preceded the greater, the initiated received some preparatory instruction. Myths, allegories, symbols, ceremonies, hymns, were the usual modes of religious instruction prevalent in remote antiquity. Even among the Hebrews, there was no public preaching till after the Babylonish captivity; and then it was practised not in the Temple itself, but in the synagogues. And as to the heathens, Leibnitz long ago observed, "that they neither practised preaching, nor put forth any formularies or confessions of belief".

The doctrines taught in the Eleusinian mysteries are thus summed up by a living Catholic writer. "One supreme God—the eternity of matter—the immortality of the soul—the deification of the elements and of the Heavenly bodies—free-will—a judgment after death—the metempsychosis, and eternal felicity after certain expiatory punishments in the next world; such", says he, "it appears to us, were the dogmas taught in these mysteries".*

The estimable and learned Silvestre de Sacy, too, says, "that the impure emblems, so frequently exhibited in heathen worship, were not displayed in the initiations of Eleusis".

* Cesare Cantu, *Hist. Univ.*, t. i., p. 259.

Of the salutary influence of these mysteries on moral life, we have, besides the testimony of the Greek poets just cited, that of eminent orators and historians.

My limits will not allow me to cite the remarkable passages of the orator Andocides,* and of the rhetorician Isocrates,† on this matter; but I must content myself with the testimony of two writers, who, at the close of classical antiquity, ratify the judgments of the ancients on this subject. In his work, *De Legibus*, Cicero thus eulogizes the Mysteries of Eleusis: "Nam mihi quum multa eximia divinaque videntur Athenæ tuæ peperisse, atque in vitâ hominum attulisse, tum nihil melius illis mysteriis, quibus ex agresti immanique vitâ exculti ad humanitatem et mitigati sumus: Initiaque, ut appellantur, ita re vera principia vitæ cognovimus; neque solum cum lætitiâ vivendi rationem accepimus, sed etiam cum spe meliore moriendi".‡ And Diodorus Siculus, somewhat later, thus records the general opinion: "It is said", he writes, "that those who have been initiated in those mysteries, become more pious, more just, and in every respect better men".§

These initiations must not be confounded with the Bacchic Mysteries, which even at an early period partook of a licentious character. But at the time when Christianity was preached to the heathen world, the Mysteries of Eleusis had already much degenerated.

You will not of course misunderstand me. You will not suppose, after what I have said of paganism, that I am attributing to these mysteries any supernatural influence, or wishing you to believe that these poor, weak elements of religion, where truth

* *De Myst.*, ss. 31.

† *Panegy.*, c. vi. p. 20.

‡ *De Legibus*, lib. xi. c. 14.

§ Γινεσθαι φασι καὶ εὖσε βεσπέρους καὶ δικαιοτέρους καὶ κατὰ πᾶν βελτίονας ἑαυτῶν τοὺς τῶν μυστηρίων κοινωνήσαντας.—*Diod. Sic.*, lib. v. p. 48.

was at best clouded with so much error, could produce a perfect moral regeneration. I only mean to say, that as, under the Christian dispensation, theological and philosophical speculations and researches, unaccompanied with acts of humility and prayer, will not lead those outside the true Church to any satisfactory result; so we find something (though in an infinitely inferior degree), analogous in heathenism. Ancient philosophy, as it appears, was incapable of working a moral reform; but the most respectable testimony assures us, that those who approached the shrines of Eleusis, and beheld unveiled the antique majesty of traditions, and there sought out the truth not by reasoning only, but by supplication also, returned better and worthier men. Hence it is a remarkable fact, that the Pythagoreans, who are admitted to have been the best and the purest of the Greeks, were closely connected with these mysteries, as well as with the Orphic theology, which there played so important a part.

Such were the nature and the tendency of these celebrated mysteries, from which Freemasonry derives its descent. But how hollow and absurd is this pretension, I shall clearly show, when I analyze the religious tenets of this institution. The frivolous deism, which is at the bottom of the Masonic mystery, will then appear to have neither a doctrinal affinity, nor a historical connection with the initiations of Eleusis.

Nor are the endeavours of another class of freemasons, to deduce their order from the ancient Jews, a whit more successful. No ancient Jew could be found, who was not a believer in the law, and the prophets, and the Messiah to come. The spiritual-minded Hebrew, indeed, understood the purport and the significance of the legal ceremonial. He knew that it was of but temporary obligation, and that it prefigured a better and a higher order of things ;

but yet he bowed to its authority, for he recognized its divine origin and awful sanctions, as well as the lofty purposes it was destined to subserve.

Moreover, by the side of the written law, there was a chain of traditions preserved by the Jewish Church, and which it faithfully clung to. The Hebrews ever believed, that with the delivery of the law, certain explanations were entrusted to their priesthood by their inspired law-giver. In the New Testament we are told that the law and the prophets bear witness to Christ. Yet in looking over the law, we find but one luminous passage clearly prophetic of the Messiah. Yet the Hebrew, enlightened by the traditionary explanations of his Church, well understood the high significance of ordinances, rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices, as typical of the character and the office of the Redeemer to come. Thus an impassable abyss lies between the monotheism of the ancient Jews, and that vague, undefined, purely personal religion, called Deism, which, as we shall see, forms the basis of Masonry.

The patriarchal theism was founded on Revelation, and deduced from that source its whole system of doctrine, morals, and worship. It recognized the necessity of public prayer, and animal sacrifice, and assigned the functions of the priesthood, not to each individual, but to the head of the family only.

The Mosaic law, though, indeed, local in its destination, filled up the outline of doctrine and ritual in the elder dispensation, introduced in order to guard the chosen people against the dangers of idolatry, a far stricter discipline and a more elaborate ceremonial system, and by appointing a separate sacerdotal body, transferred the priesthood from domestic to public life. Both these dispensations, too, pointed unerringly to all the mysteries of future redemption.

Not so the modern deism, which falsely styles itself the Religion of Nature. It is based, not on

Revelation, but on the private judgment of each individual. Here religion is purely and essentially *personal*, devoid not of sacrifice only, but of public prayer, and without the intervention of any priesthood, public or domestic. Its doctrinal system is so vague, that some of its partisans have called in question even the immortality of the soul, and agree in nothing, save in the belief in a Supreme Being.

So far from being prophetic of Christianity, as was the elder religion of nature, deism sets itself up in opposition to Christ, and denies His Revelation.

It is not even, like the better elements in heathenism, a corruption of primitive Religion, but something directly antagonistic to it. In a word, it is what the great Bossuet long ago called it, "*a disguised or practical atheism*".

It is now time to sketch the history of the Masonic Order.

Freemasonry in its first beginnings must be traced to the Masonic Lodges of the middle age, in which the architects held their sittings, and framed statutes for their corporation. Thus, it is well known, that when Erwin of Steinbach had begun the glorious Cathedral of Strasburg, he founded in that city a lodge, the centre and the model of other lodges spread throughout Europe. The heads of each of those lodges assembled at Ratisbon on the 25th April, 1459, and drew up the Act of Incorporation, which instituted in perpetuity the lodge of Strasburg as the chief lodge, and its president as the Grand-Master of the Freemasons of Germany. The institute was formally sanctioned by the Emperor Maximilian in the year 1498, and that sanction was afterwards ratified by the Emperors Charles the Fifth and Ferdinand the First. These ordinances, subsequently renewed, were printed in the year 1563.

The masters, journeymen, and apprentices formed a corporation, having a special jurisdiction in dif-

ferent localities. But the lodge of Strasburg was preëminent above the rest, and, in conformity with the statutes, pronounced a definitive judgment in all causes brought under its cognizance. In order not to be confounded with the vulgar mechanics, who could handle only the hammer and the trowel, the Freemasons invented signs of mutual recognition, and certain ceremonies of initiation. A traditionary secret was handed down, revealed only to the initiated, and that according to the degrees they had attained to in the corporation. They adopted for symbols the instruments of their craft—the square, the level, the compass, and the hammer.

In course of time, it appears that the masonic lodges, in order to secure patrons and friends to their fraternity, admitted among their associates individuals totally unacquainted with the architectural art. And so, by degrees, other objects besides those connected with their craft, engaged the attention of the brethren. The mystery, which enveloped their proceedings, was common to all the trade-associations of the middle ages.

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the government began to entertain suspicions of these masonic lodges, and interdicted them. In the time of the Commonwealth, the royalists of England, in order to concert measures against the dominant tyranny, had recourse to secret political societies; and these societies were now engrafted on the masonic lodges, which, from the number of men of various professions they admitted into their ranks, were convenient receptacles for carrying on political plots. The scriptural symbols and scriptural phraseology employed in their lodges, were well suited to the spirit and habits of the time. Ramsay, in his *History of Freemasonry*, does not deny that the lodges powerfully contributed to the restoration of Charles the Second.

After the Revolution of 1688, the exiled Jacobites

introduced this modern political Freemasonry into France; but the government of Louis the Fourteenth checked its diffusion. Under the regency established on the demise of that monarch, the English Pretender founded several lodges in that country; and the Regent himself, a sated voluptuary, eagerly sought in these secret societies for some new source of gratification. In the year 1725, the first lodge in France was held under the presidency of three Englishmen, Lord Derwentwater, Sir John Maskelyne, and Sir Hugh Tighe.

In the year 1736, on the departure of Lord Harnonester, second Grand-Master of the Order in France, the court intimated, that if the choice to that dignity fell on a Frenchman, he should be sent to the Bastille. The Duke d'Antin was, however, elected; and under him French masonry attained to a certain consistence. In the year 1744, during the presidency of the Duke de Clermont, a prince of the blood, masonic lodges were expressly prohibited by the government; but this prohibition served only to increase and spread them in the provinces. At length the lodges in Paris emancipated themselves from all dependency on those in England.

A Scotch gentleman, the Chevalier Ramsay, was one of the most zealous promoters of freemasonry in France. He had been bred up in the principles of Calvinism, and then having fallen into a state of scepticism, had, in order to obtain a solution of his religious doubts, travelled in Holland and France, where he was converted to the Catholic Church by the great Fenelon. As a Jacobite, he was attached to an association that, as he confesses, had rendered great services to the House of Stuart; and as tutor to the sons of the Pretender, he had the best opportunities for furthering its success. A zealous Catholic and a devoted royalist, the advocate and promoter of freemasonry! How repugnant is this

fact to our modern notions! But observe, the Church had as yet pronounced no judgment on the matter. Ramsay proposed, as grand-master of the Order, to convene at Paris a council, consisting of deputies from all the masonic lodges in Europe; but the Prime Minister, Cardinal Fleury, induced him to abandon this project.

“The Society of Freemasons”, says a living Italian historian, “retained in Great Britain a serious character; but in other countries it was soon converted into convivial meetings, and became a sort of gay heresy, apparently innoxious, and which even by acts of beneficence sought to render itself useful. Its mysteriousness served to attract and to excite the imagination: the visionary thought to perceive in the Order a school of chimerical perfection and of transcendental mysticism: the charlatan, an abundant source of illusions: some, under the mantle of its name, practised knavery; but a greater number looked on this institution as a means for the relief of indigence. It was impossible that governments should not look with distrust on those secret assemblies, and on that mysterious understanding between men belonging to different countries. Hence, all masonic lodges were proscribed, first in France in the year 1729, then in Holland in 1735, and successively in Flanders, in Sweden, in Poland, in Spain, in Portugal, in Hungary, and in Switzerland. At Vienna in the year 1743, a lodge was burst into by soldiers: the freemasons had to give up their swords, and were conducted to prison, or set at large on their parole. As personages of high rank were of the number, great sensation was excited, and rumours were rife. But the masons declared, that as they were bound by the promise of secrecy, they were unable to reply to any judicial interrogatory. The government, satisfied with this plea, set the prisoners free, and contented itself with prohibiting any more assemblies of the kind.

Already in 1738, Pope Clement the Twelfth had excommunicated the freemasons in Italy.* Benedict the Fourteenth renewed the anathemas;† and thereupon, in the kingdom of Naples, where the Order was widely spread, Charles the Third applied to the members of this society the penalties enacted against all disturbers of the public peace. Other princes followed a like policy.

Such is a brief historical sketch of the rise and early progress of Freemasonry. We have seen how this modern sect grew out of the corporations of the purely architectural masons of the middle age; how it gradually assumed a political character; and how in England, in the seventeenth century, it was the refuge and the defence of the partisans of monarchy, in their endeavours to throw off a detested revolutionary yoke. We have seen, too, that men of most estimable character and exalted position had attached themselves to this society.

How then could an institution, apparently so praiseworthy, have drawn down the censures of the Church? How could it have aroused the suspicions and the hostility of so many different governments?

Let us investigate the matter calmly and with care. In the first place, the Catholic Church condemns all societies which, like that of the freemasons, impose secret oaths. The Scripture tells us, that "our speech should be yea, yea, and nay, nay; and that it is not lawful to swear". The Church, which brings a message from God, and speaks to us in the name of God, can exact an oath of us; and so can the civil power; for it has received from God the sword of justice, and, for the ends of justice, it bids us invoke the name of the Supreme Author of all right.

Secondly, the oaths of the freemason are not only secret, but, at the best, unnecessary; for, should we even be unable to prove that in very many coun-

* *Hist. Univ.*, C. Cantu, vol. ix., p. 216. † *Vide Appendix.*

tries the ultimate objects of Freemasonry are most culpable, yet all admit that the matters sworn to in the minor grades are most frivolous and puerile. But a frivolous or unnecessary oath is in the eyes of the Church a guilty oath.

Next to secret oaths, there is another offence chargeable on the Masonic, as on all other secret societies. This is, that it destroys human freedom, as it removes all individual responsibility. The mason of one grade knows not the projects of the brothers of a higher degree, nor the lodges of one country, the schemes, the principles, and the workings of those of another. The individual is the blind, passive instrument of an order, whose ultimate aims are wrapped up in secrecy. He is like a man who without a lamp enters into a dark cavern, whose length and breadth he knows not, nor the tortuous passages that cross the main path. Where the ends of an institution are kept secret, and the means only are avowed, judgment is at fault, and the individual cannot estimate the extent of the responsibility he incurs for the errors of his order.

But, in the third place, a more serious charge yet attaches to Freemasonry. There are some secret societies, whose professed aim is the removal of certain local grievances, or a violent overthrow of some particular government. But the Masonic Order pretends to be in possession of a secret to make men better and happier, than Christ, His Apostles, and His Church have made, or can make them. Monstrous pretension! How is this esoteric teaching consistent with the full and final revelation of divine truths? If in the deep midnight of heathenism, the sage had been justified in seeking in the Mysteries of Eleusis for a keener apprehension of the truths of primitive religion, how does this justify the mason in the mid-day effulgence of Christianity, to tell mankind that he has a wonderful secret for ad-

vancing them in virtue and in happiness—a secret unknown to the Incarnate God, and to the Church with which, as He promised, the Paraclete should abide for ever? And even the Protestant, who rejects the teaching of that unerring Church, if he admits Christianity to be a *final* Revelation, must scout the pretensions of a society, that claims the possession of moral truths unknown to the Christian religion.

The very pretensions of the mason are thus impious and absurd. He stands condemned on his own showing; and any inquiry into the doctrines and the workings of his order becomes utterly superfluous. But when, further, he obstinately withholds from the knowledge of the competent authority his marvellous remedies for the moral and social maladies of men, what is he but the charlatan, who refuses to submit to the examination of a medical board his pretended wonderful cures?

On this subject, Frederick Schlegel, in a work which I translated in my youth, has expressed himself with his characteristic wisdom. Alluding to the Masonic Order, he says: “Any secret spiritual association, diffused at once among Christians and Mahometans, cannot be of a very Christian nature, nor long continue so. Nay, the very idea of an esoteric society for the propagation of any secret doctrines is not compatible with the very principle of Christianity itself; for Christianity is a divine mystery, which, according to the intention of its Divine Founder, lies open to all, and is daily exposed on every altar. For this reason, in a Revelation imparted to all alike, there can be no secrecy, as in the pagan mysteries, where, by the side of the popular mythology and the public religion of the state, certain esoteric doctrines were inculcated to the initiated only. This would be to constitute a church within a church—a measure to be as little tolerated

or justified as an *imperium in imperio*; and in an age, where worldly interests, and public or secret views of policy have far greater ascendancy than religious opinions or sentiments, such a secret parasitical church would unquestionably, as experience has already proved, be very soon transformed into a secret directory for political changes and revolutions".* So far this great writer.

I have clearly shown, I trust, that the very principle on which Freemasonry is founded, is incompatible with the nature and the objects of the Christian Revelation.

Let us now more fully investigate the constitution, the principles, and the moral and social influence of this Order.

In the first place, observe the dates of the first Papal Bulls of Condemnation, 1738 to 1751—the periods of the rise and the development of those irreligious and revolutionary principles, which reached their culminating point in 1790. From their high watch-tower on the Seven Hills, the successors of Peter saw the coming storm; they discerned the black clouds big with tempest. And among those clouds, none then hung more portentously over the European horizon, than those secret societies, that henceforth began to gather into denser and darker masses. It has ever been the privilege of those pontiffs to warn Europe of the dangers that menaced her; and on this occasion, their warnings were not unheeded, as we have seen, by the civil governments of the day. How judicious are the following observations of a late Church-historian of France! "When we consider", says M. Picot, "that Freemasonry was born with irreligion; that it grew up with it; that it has kept pace with its progress; that it has never pleased but men either impious or indifferent about religion; and that it has always been regarded with

* *Philos. of Hist.*, p. 456. Bohn, seventh ed.

disfavour by zealous Catholics; we can only regard it as an institution bad in itself, or at least dangerous in its effects".*

Let us hear on the same subject a Scotch Protestant writer, Professor Robison of Edinburgh, who, about sixty years ago, published a work entitled *Proofs of a Conspiracy against all the Established Religions and Governments of Europe*. This writer had been originally a member of the Masonic Society, which he subsequently abandoned. The question which now engages our attention, he reduces within a small compass.

"If", says he, "there be a necessity for secrecy, the purpose of the association is either frivolous or it is selfish. Now, in either case, the danger of such secret assemblies is manifest. Mere frivolity can never seriously occupy men come to age. And, accordingly, we see that in every corner of Europe, where Freemasonry is established, the lodges have become seed-beds of public mischief. I believe that no ordinary brother will say, that the occupations in the lodges are anything better than frivolous, very frivolous indeed. The distribution of charity needs be no secret; and it is but a very small part of the employment of the meeting". Then the writer goes on to say that, frivolity not furnishing sufficient occupation to the mind, there is the danger that the meetings will be employed to purposes which require concealment. "When this is the case", he continues, "self-interest alone must prompt and rule, and now there is no length that some men will not go, when they think themselves in no danger of detection and punishment. The whole proceedings of the secret societies of Freemasons on the Continent (and I am authorized to say, of some lodges in Britain) have taken one turn, and this turn is perfectly natural. In all countries, there are men of

* *Memoires Ecclesiastiques du 18^{me} siècle*, t. ii., p. 163-4.

licentious morals. . . . And where can the sentiments or schemes of discontented men find such safe utterance or probable support, as in a secret society?"*

Such is the severe judgment pronounced on this association by two learned writers, one a Catholic, the other a Protestant, and who by reading, and the last even by personal observation, had made it a subject of serious study. But here, on the very threshold of this inquiry, we are met with the objection: If Freemasonry be what these writers and others describe, how comes it to pass, that so many estimable and amiable individuals in the last and in the present century, in Catholic as in Protestant countries, have been members of the society? If it be revolutionary, as you say, how is it that so many personages of high rank and illustrious birth, and even princes of the blood, have been its patrons and protectors? If it has such anti-Christian tendencies as you tell us, how is it that many sincerely religious men, Catholic and Protestant, have belonged to it? How is it, again, that, even after the great social catastrophe of 1790, which Freemasonry is alleged to have had such a share in bringing about, men of exalted position, especially in Great Britain, should still be found among its associates and patrons?

When we come to look more nearly into the real state of things, these objections will be found not to carry with them much weight. In the first place, in a society, where there are more than thirty grades, and each with a proportionate scale of knowledge, it may well be supposed, that the great majority of the members are ignorant of its ulterior designs. Again, it must, as before, be observed, that as the Protestant Churches have not interdicted these societies, Protestants, in frequenting them, incur not the same de-

* *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, etc. By Professor Robison, p. 464-6. Dublin : 1798.

gree of responsibility, which attaches to the Catholic members. Further, the Order of Freemasons, like every other secret association, varies a great deal with the circumstances of time and place, and reflects the temper of society. Moreover, the fact that men of rank and fortune are to be found at the head of an association, is no proof that it is not revolutionary. "All revolutions", says the great Bossuet, "are brought about by ambitious grandees, heading men of desperate fortunes". History shows, too, that fanaticism, whether religious or political, is often more powerful than self-interest. And more especially was this the case in the last century, when the irreligion which infected a large portion of the continental nobility, smote them with a judicial blindness, that made them insensible to the most palpable interests of their own order, as well as of all other classes of society. And, besides, the despotism in the Protestant Continental states, and the absolutism prevalent since the age of Louis the Fourteenth in many Catholic countries, by depriving the nobility of an active political existence, blunted their political capacity, and made them blind to many dangers, and, among others, to those arising from secret societies.

But the terrible experiences of the last seventy years, as well as the reiterated censures of the Church, have at last opened the eyes of all Catholics, be they high or low, to the many evils thence arising to religion and to social order.

Then, as regards these countries, they have not felt the shock of those revolutions which have convulsed the Continent, and are therefore less alive to the dangers from secret societies. Yet Professor Robison shows, that in the last agitated years of the eighteenth century, some of the British Masonic lodges became infected with a revolutionary spirit.

Well-regulated parliamentary institutions, too,

exert, undoubtedly, in the long run, an influence antagonistic to that of these occult associations.

At all events, it is remarkable, that political Freemasonry, which had its rise in England, should, according to the testimony of foreign, as well as of native writers, have ever retained a more innocuous character in that country.

Further, that even in the Continental lodges, the greater part of Masons were ignorant of the dangerous tendencies of the Order, is a fact equally well attested. Let us on these two points hear the Abbé Barruel, who, in his elaborate work, entitled the *Memoirs of Jacobinism*, thus speaks: "In treating of Freemasonry", says he, "truth and justice rigorously compel us to begin with an exception, that exculpates the greater part of those brethren who have been initiated, and who would have conceived a just horror for this Association, had they been able to foresee that it could ever make them contract obligations which militated against the duties of the religious man and of the true citizen. England, in particular, is full of those upright men, who, as excellent citizens, and belonging to all stations of life, are proud of being Masons, and who may be distinguished from the others by ties, which only appear to unite them more closely in the bonds of charity and fraternal affection".

He adds, "for a considerable length of time, a like exception might have been made of the generality of lodges, both in France and Germany".

In short, he concludes, "the number of exceptions to be made for upright Masons is beyond the conception of those, who are not thoroughly acquainted with the principles and the proceedings of the sect".* Thus far the Abbé Barruel.

As regards the more exceptional character of the Masonic lodges in these countries, Professor Robi-

* *Memoirs of Jacobinism*, vol. ii., p. 273-5.

son of Edinburgh confirms the statement of the French abbé: "While the Freemasonry of the Continent", says he, "was tricked out in all the frippery of stars and ribbons, or was perverted to the most profligate and infamous purposes, and the lodges became seminaries of foppery, sedition, and impiety, it has retained in Britain its original form, simple and unadorned, and the lodges have remained the scenes of innocent merriment, or meetings of charity and beneficence".*

In this opinion the great German writer, whom I have already cited, also concurs.

Having now traced the history of this association, then by respectable testimony justified the judgments, which the Church has pronounced upon it, and having afterwards, even in condemning the institution, acquitted large portions of its members of all cognizance of its impious and anti-social tendencies, I proceed to examine its constitution and its doctrines.

Now, before I enter into an examination of the secret doctrines of Masonry, there are principles and practices on the very surface of this society, which (as gentlemen, who from conscientious motives have quitted the Order, have assured me), shocked them from the very first.

First, there is the system of exclusive beneficence.

The practice of costly conviviality is not in itself favourable to charity; and the sums expended by the masons on their banquets exceed beyond comparison the moneys bestowed in alms. But this is not the point I wish to insist on. I speak of that restriction of charity to the brethren of the Order—a restriction so repugnant to the spirit of Christianity, which though it assigns the first claim to those of the "household of the faith", embraces all mankind within the comprehensive range of its beneficence.

* *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, p. 522.

Again, Freemasonry boasts that its brethren, when by chance they encounter each other on the battle-field, are led by signs of mutual recognition to save each other's lives. There is surely a great illusion here. The soldier, unless his public duty—his duty to his sovereign and his country—bid him in the mortal encounter slay his adversary, is bound to spare his life, whether he belong or no to the right worshipful company of Masons! And such compliance with arbitrary and factitious engagements interferes with the sacred dictates of morality. It is otherwise with the claims of kindred in the hostile engagement; for, as they are anterior, so they rise in many cases superior to the obligations of civil society, and belong to an exceptional order of things, which even Freemasonry in the madness of its pride cannot pretend to.

Then how very refined—how very exalted is the masonic code of ethics! The mason is enjoined not to practise the arts of seduction on any members of the family of a brother-mason! So this brotherhood, not content with restricting the precept of charity, restricts that of purity—a restriction which, I do not hesitate to say, the better heathenism would have spurned; for it based morality, not on the conventional rules of any society, but on the eternal and immutable laws of God. I may add, that such arbitrary restrictions throw ridicule on the Divine precept, and, so far from checking, tend to promote sensuality.

Further, we see how by its exclusive, egotistic morality (if I may use the expression), as well as by its classification of all mankind into the two Orders—the profane and the initiated, the enlightened and the ignorant—this institution tends to foster a pride of caste, and a personal arrogance, most adverse to all religious feeling and moral improvement.

Lastly, there are atrocious oaths and ceremonies

in the higher grades of Masonry, which tend to harden the heart, and to encourage cruelty and crime. Such is the custom of leading the initiated with his eyes bandaged into a dark chamber, bringing before him a mannikin stuffed with bladders, full of blood, and bidding him avenge the death of Adoniram, the favourite hero, as we shall see, of Masonry, by plunging his poniard into the breast of the supposed victim. The bandage is then removed, and the initiated, who had inwardly consented to be the instrument of crime, discovers the horrid farce. But how that theatric semblance of assassination is calculated to cherish the spirit of revenge and of all the darker passions!

These are things lying, as I have said, on the very surface of this institution, most of which are known to all the members of the society, and which ought to deter a wise man and an earnest Christian from joining it.

Now, as to the constitution of this Order, it is divided into thirty-three grades; but its main degrees are six, that of Apprentice—of Fellow-craft—of Master—of Elect—of Rosicrucian—and of *Kadosch*. There is a distinct ceremonial, signs of recognition, pass-words, and grips, for each degree. This great quantity of degrees, and their dependence and subordination, are calculated to insure secrecy, as well as augment the numbers, wealth, and influence of the Order. The whole machinery is constructed with such skill, that it can be easily managed by a few hands. In the ceremonies of initiation into the various degrees, everything is devised that can strike the imagination, awaken curiosity, or excite terror.

As to the Masonic symbols, they are thus described as existing in some portions of this society, which is much divided in itself. In a charge delivered by a Venerable to a brother admitted to one of the higher grades, it is there said, that the three implements.

with which the brother has been made acquainted, the Bible, the compass, and the square, have a secret signification unknown to him. By the Bible, he is to understand that he is to acknowledge no other law but that of Adam—the law which the Almighty had engraved on his heart, and which is called the Law of Nature. The compass recalls to his mind, that God is the central point of everything, from which everything is equally distant, and to which everything is equally near. By the square he is to learn, *that God has made everything equal. By the cubic stone he is to learn, that all his actions are equal with respect to the Sovereign Good.**

With respect to the doctrines of the Order, let us hear the Abbé Barruel:

“The affected secrecy on the first principles of Masonry”, says he, “liberty and equality—the oath never to reveal that such was the basis of their doctrines, showed that there existed such an explanation of these words, as the sect was interested in hiding both from the State and from the Church. And, in reality, it was to attain to this explanation of the last mysteries, that so many trials, oaths, and degrees were necessary.

“To convince the reader”, continues Barruel, “how much these surmises are realized in the occult lodges, it is necessary for us to go back to the degree of Master, and relate the allegorical story, whereof the successive explanations and interpretations form the profound mysteries of the higher degrees.

“In this degree of Master-Mason, the lodge is hung round with black. In the middle is a coffin, covered with a pall: the brethren standing round it in attitudes denoting sorrow and revenge. When the new adept is admitted, the Master relates to him the following history or fable:—

“Adoniram presided over the payment of the

* See Barruel, t. ii., p. 303.

workmen who were building the Temple by Solomon's orders. There were three thousand workmen. That each one might receive his due, Adoniram divided them into three classes—apprentices, fellow-craftsmen, and masters. He entrusted each class with a word, signs, and a grip, by which they might be recognized. Each class was to preserve the greatest secrecy as to these signs and words. Three of the fellow-crafts, wishing to know the word of the Master, and by that means obtain his salary, hid themselves in the Temple, and each posted himself at a different gate. At the usual time, when Adoniram came to shut the gates of the Temple, the first of the three fellow-crafts met him, and demanded the word of the masters. Adoniram refused to give it, and received a violent blow with a stick on his head. He flies to another gate, is met, challenged, and treated in a similar manner by the second. Flying to the third door, he is killed by the fellow-craft posted there, on his refusing to betray the word. His assassins buried him under a heap of ruins, and marked the spot with a branch of acacia.

“Adoniram's absence gave great uneasiness to Solomon and the masters. He is sought for everywhere: at length one of the masters discovers a corpse, and taking it by the finger, the finger parted from the hand: he took it by the wrist, and it parted from the arm; when the master, in astonishment, cried out, ‘*Mac Benac*’, which the craft interprets, by the words, ‘the flesh parts from the bones’.

“The history finished, the adept is informed that the object of the degree he has just received is to recover the word lost by the death of Adoniram, and to revenge this martyr of the Masonic secrecy. The generality of Masons, looking upon this history as no more than a fable, and the ceremonies as puerile, give themselves very little trouble in searching further into these mysteries.

“These sports, however, assume a more serious aspect, when we arrive at the degree of Elect. This degree is subdivided into two parts: the first has the revenging of Adoniram for its object; the other to recover the *word*, or, rather, the sacred doctrine which it expressed, and which has been lost”.*

So far the Abbé Barruel.

The last passage is very worthy of attention; for it contains the whole pith of the religious and the political system of the Masonic Order.

Here is now the fitting place to introduce the history of the Knight-Templars—a history which marks so important an era in that of the Masonic Order.

The Order of Templars—so called from the site they occupied, where Solomon’s Temple once stood—was founded in the twelfth century by Hughes des Payens, a nobleman of Champagne. Like the Knights of St. John, they constituted an Order at once military and religious, which had sprung up in the stirring and eventful period of the Crusades. To the three ordinary vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, they added a fourth, namely, the defence of the pilgrims who visited the tomb of our Lord.

These spiritual knights were the foremost in the field: to them the post of greatest danger was ever allotted; they were the terror of the infidel, and the pride of the faithful; and great indeed were the services they rendered to the Christian cause. There was, however, in their valour, from the first, something bordering on rashness; and we find not in them that steady equanimity of character evinced by their rivals, the Knights Hospitallers of St. John. Great was the favour which the Templars had deservedly acquired by their eminent services and heroic achievements. Popes and emperors, princes and prelates, nobles and burgesses, vied with each other in lavishing wealth, honours, and privileges on the

* Barruel, *Memoirs*, t. ii., p. 297-9.

Order. It numbered many and well-endowed priories in every state in Europe; and a King of Arragon went so far as to bequeath his kingdom to the Order; but the three estates justly resisted so rash and unwise a legacy. By degrees excessive riches introduced luxury, and luxury laxity, among these knights. Jealousy and ambition made them set the interests of their community above the interests of the Church and of Christendom: they sometimes forgot themselves so far as to turn their arms against their Christian brethren, or treacherously betray their designs to the Moslem foe. The darkest suspicions now gathered around the Order; those suspicions were soon converted into formal accusations; and the Knight-Templars were tried in 1307, and in the following years, both before civil and ecclesiastical tribunals. Doctrinal aberrations and abominable crimes (in many respects similar to those of the ancient Manichæans) formed the purport of the charges against them. In some places the knights were found guilty; but in most countries they were acquitted. It was but a small minority that was chargeable with these dark transgressions against faith and morals; and the great bulk of the Order was innocent, though many, under intimidation, had not denounced the crimes and impieties of their brethren. The Knights of Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, England, Scotland, and Ireland, had no share in these frightful disorders; and it was only in France, and in Syria and Palestine, the guilty members of this community were to be found. To explain this fact, the late illustrious German Catholic writer, Görres, sagaciously conjectures, that many nobles of the South of France, who entered the Order, had been already contaminated with the doctrinal and the moral errors of the Manichæan Albigenses—errors which were further aggravated by their intercourse with the corrupt sectaries of the

East. They thus formed *an order within an order*; and their abominable doctrines and practices remained unknown to the great majority of the knights. This appears to me a happy solution of a difficult historical problem.

The last Grand-Master of the Order, Jacques de Molay, and fifty of his companions, who under the violence of torture, had confessed their guilt, retracted their confessions. But though brought, in 1314, before a civil tribunal by Philip le Bel, and condemned as relapsed heretics, they perished at the stake solemnly protesting their innocence; and that circumstance, as well as the hitherto blameless character of Molay, entitles his last asseverations to credence.

Pope Clement the Fifth, though at first favourably disposed towards the Order, seeing, after juridical inquiry, the great corruption of a certain portion of its members, and that others, under intimidation, had declined to denounce to ecclesiastical authority the errors and the crimes of their brethren, thought the safest course was to suppress the Order. It must be borne in mind, too, that though the great majority of the knights were guiltless of the dreadful errors and crimes chargeable on a certain portion, yet everywhere the Order had fallen into a state of great laxity. In some countries the surviving Templars were received into other military communities; and in Portugal, especially, incorporated into the Order of Christ, they showed themselves worthy of their ancient renown, and had a glorious part in the nautical discoveries, and in the military and maritime conquests of the fifteenth century.

"The knights", says the recent German Protestant historian of Masonry, "who were lucky enough to escape from France, assembled in one of the Scotch Hebrides, the Isle of Mull".* In this island, on the

* *La Franc-Maçonnerie*. Par M. Eckert. Traduit de l'Allemand, par M. l'Abbé Gyr., p. 32. Liège, 1854.

Feast of St. John's, in the year 1307, the members of the Order reorganized their old institution, with its ancient mysteries and aims. To these was added the desire of restoring the Order to its ancient splendour and power, as well as the passion of vengeance. By their entrance into the Masonic Corporation, they concerted the perpetuation of their Order. Hence the origin of the Scotch degrees of Masonry. It does not appear proved, that the Manichæan principles of the condemned Templars were communicated to this branch of the institution, but only a general spirit of hostility to Church and State.

It is to be observed that it was the remnant of French Templars only who entered into the Masonic Order. The German Knights, for example, were incorporated with the Knights Hospitallers of St. John.

Let us now remark the close resemblance in the mysteries of the ancient Templars to those of some of the Masonic grades. In the mysteries of the bad portion of these knights, the initiator said to the candidate: "Swear that you believe in a God, the Creator of all things, who neither did, nor will die"; and then follow blasphemies against the God of Christianity. How completely doth the Jehovah of the Masons correspond to this representation! How completely doth this declaration correspond with the Rosicrucian interpretation of that inscription on the Cross, whereby the Jews unwittingly confessed the Royalty of Christ—an interpretation, which for the sake of reverence I will not repeat, but which totally divests our ever-blessed Lord not only of His Divinity, but even of His Prophetical office.

The bad portion of the Templars chose Good-Friday for their impious orgies. The Rosicrucians (an extreme sect of Masons) selected the same sacred day for uttering blasphemies against our Divine Redeemer.

The cry of "Fraternity" among the Templars answered to that of "Liberty and Equality" among the Masons, as both words veiled the anti-social errors of the one and the other.

The Templars were bound to secrecy by the most terrible oaths, the violation whereof involved the penalty of death. The same oath subsists among the Masons.

No profane being could be present at the mysteries of the Templars, and armed brethren were placed at the door to keep off all curious intruders. It is so with the Masons, whose brother terrible, or the tiler, guards with a drawn sword the portals of the lodge.

"Thus everything", says Barruel, "the very signs, the language, the names of grand master, of knight, of temple, even the columns of *Jackin and Boaz*, which decorated the Temple of Jerusalem, and which are supposed to have been consigned to the care of the Templars—all, in a word, betray our Freemasons as the descendants of those proscribed knights.

"But what a damning proof do we not find in those trials", continues Barruel, "where the candidate is taught to strike with his poniard the pretended assassin of their grand master! In common with the Templars, it is on Philip le Bel that they wreak their vengeance; and in every other king the sect behold this pretended assassin".*

Opening at random Carlile's *Manual of Masonry*, I find the following passage in a charge delivered before the brethren of the Royal-Arch Masonry: "Companions, it is said, the Masonic system exhibits a stupendous and beautiful fabric, founded on universal wisdom, unfolding its gates to receive, without prejudice or discrimination, *the worthy professors of every description of genuine religion or knowledge; concentrating, as it were, into one body, their just tenets, un-*

* Barruel, t. ii. p. 391-3.

incumbered with the disputable peculiarities of any sect or persuasion. This system originated in the earliest of ages, and among the wisest of men".*

I think it would be difficult to find a more pithy expression of utter religious indifferentism. What would become of religion when it had passed through such a crucible? On what common ground would all the systems meet? And who is to determine what are *just tenets*, and what is *genuine religion*?

In the Rosicrucian degree, which is one of the highest grades in Masonry, impiety assumes a bolder tone.

Christ Himself, in the eyes of these sophisters, is the destroyer of the unity of God. He, according to their impious notion, is the great enemy of Jehovah; and to infuse the hatred of the sect into the minds of the new adepts, constitutes the grand mystery of the degree, which they have called Rosicrucian.

The ornaments of the Rosicrucian lodge appear to be solely intended to recall to the candidate the solemn mystery of Mount Calvary. The whole is hung in black—an altar is to be seen at the bottom of the room, and over the altar is a transparent representation of the three crosses, the middle one bearing the usual inscription. The brethren in sacerdotal vestments are seated on the ground, in the most profound silence, sorrowful and afflicted, resting their heads on their arms to represent their grief. It is not the death of the Son of God, who died the victim for our sins, that is the cause of their affliction. The main object of it is evident by the first answer which is made to the question, with which all the lodges are generally opened.

The master asks the senior warden, what o'clock it is? The answer varies according to the different degrees.

* Carlile's *Manual of Masonry*, p. 9.

In this it is as follows: "It is the first hour of the day, the time when the veil of the Temple was rent asunder—when darkness and consternation were spread over the Earth—when the light was darkened—*when the implements of Masonry were broken—when the flaming star disappeared*—when the cubic stone was broken—*when the word was lost*".*

O Masonry! thou hast here told thy last secret! Enough! drop the mask—further hypocrisy is useless. If thy implements were broken by the victory which Christ, through His death, won over sin and Satan, so were those of all superstition, all error, all false philosophy. Bury thyself, then, beneath the ruins of heathenism, and approach not the precincts of Christianity! The word is not lost, as thou pretendest, but hath gone forth from Judea, and resounded to the uttermost parts of the Earth. The flaming star hath not disappeared; but that star, descried in the cloudy distance by our first great Progenitor and the Fathers of the elder Dispensation, then beaming more clearly on Israel's prophetic eye, and casting at times a broken ray over the gloom of Gentility—that star hath now risen in all its splendour above the Mount of Calvary, shines for more than eighteen hundred years with undiminished lustre, and at the last great day of doom, when darkness shall wrap the universe—when the light of the sun itself shall be extinguished, that star will yet cheer an agonizing world!

"Oh! how profound", exclaims the Abbé Barruel, "is the combination of these mysteries! Their progress is slow and tortuous; but how artfully each degree tends to the grand object!

"In the first two degrees of *apprentice* and *fellowcraft*, the sect begins by throwing out its principles of *liberty* and *equality*. After that it occupies the attention of its novices with puerile games of frater-

* Consult Barruel, t. ii., p. 310-11.

nity, or Masonic repasts; but it already trains its adepts to the profoundest secrecy by the most frightful oaths. In the third degree of *master* it relates the allegorical history of Adoniram, who is to be avenged, and of the *word*, which is to be recovered.

“In the degree of *elect*, it trains the adepts to vengeance, without pointing out the person on whom it is to fall. It carries them back to the pretended patriarchal religion of nature, and to its universal priesthood. In the *Scotch degrees*, the brethren are declared free. The word so long sought for is *Deism*, the pretended worship of Jehovah, known to the philosophers of nature. In the *Rosicrucian degree*, he who destroyed the worship of Jehovah is represented as Christ Himself; and it is on the Gospel, and on the Son of Man Himself, that the adept is to avenge the brethren, the pontiffs of Jehovah. In the last degree of *Kadosch*, the adept learns that the assassin of Adoniram is the *king*, who is to be killed, to avenge the grand-master Molay, and the order of the Masons, successors to the Knights-Templars. The religion, which is to be destroyed, is the *religion of Christ*; and the *word* (that is, liberty and equality), is to be established by the total overthrow of the altar and the throne”.

Such is the summary of the religious and the political principles of Masonry, as given by the Abbé Barruel.

Having now dwelt more fully on the religious doctrines of Masonry, let us turn to its political. And then let us compare its social tenets and influences with those of the Catholic Church.

“Liberty”, “equality”, “fraternity”—whence had Masonry derived those all-hallowed, all-blessed words? Whence but from that divine religion, which, as the Scripture saith, is “the law of perfect liberty”; for it emancipated man from the bondage to sin and Satan, and so prepared him for the highest social and

intellectual freedom. Equality and fraternity that religion proclaimed to a selfish, corrupt, and enslaved world; for it taught that all men were creatures of the same Creator, the children of the same Heavenly Father, and the co-heirs of the same Redeemer, admitted alike without distinction of rank or fortune to the blessings of the divine economy, and to the rewards of a future life. And was not fraternity taught by that religion, which showed us a God who had taken upon Himself our nature, and had died for our sins, who thus made Himself our brother, and bade all men look on each other as brethren, and declared that by this, "men shall know that ye are my disciples, that you love one another"?

But, alas! the very blessings which Christianity brought and announced to mankind, were perverted by guilty sectaries to their ruin. The very light which warmed and illumined the Earth, blinded those who looked on it with a rash, irreverent gaze. Already the Apostles warned us against those who made "liberty a cloak for malice"; who, in the words of St. Jude, "blasphemed majesty"; who would not "honour the king, nor those deputed by him to punish evil doers". The Gnostics in the early ages of the Church—the Albigenses and the Lollards of the mediæval period—the Jacobins and the Socialists of modern times, perverting the Christian idea of spiritual equality, preached up one inconsistent with all ecclesiastical and civil order—repugnant to the very constitution of human nature—ruinous to all freedom, intellectual, political, and domestic. They proclaimed a social equality, which has no analogy in the physical universe, where we see a graduated scale of being—an equality which existed not even in man's Paradisaic state, where, though there had not been a harsh separation of classes, there would have been still the inequality involved in the nuptial and in the parental relations—an equality, in fine,

which exists not in Heaven itself, where, amid all those burning hierarchies, there is ever a wondrous gradation of intelligence, felicity, and love.

But if the Catholic Church did not attempt to realize the equality of conditions, which these sects demanded—an equality, which the accidents of fortune, the differences in the duration of human life, as well as the infinite diversity of moral worth, and of physical and intellectual energy among men, rendered utterly impracticable,—did she therefore fail in her endeavours to regenerate mankind? Was she untrue to her great mission? Did she belie all those splendid promises of “liberty, equality, fraternity”, inscribed on the charter she gave to the world? Let the history of eighteen hundred years reply.

Christianity, indeed, came not on Earth to bestow secular greatness, or wealth, or power on its followers, but to preach deliverance to the captives—to open the eyes of the blind—to bind up the wounds of the bruised—to break the yoke of sin—to reveal the glories of the world to come. Yet by the very fact that it sanctified and renovated all the domestic and the social relations, it sowed the seeds of that civilization which, acting on the spontaneous energy of nations, was to produce all the marvels of modern history. And what to all those marvels and those blessings can Masonry, and all the brood of anti-Christian sects, oppose? Will they dare to set up their fantastic triangle of equality, a symbol which, wherever erected, has led to spoliation, bloodshed, and anarchy?—will they dare to oppose that symbol to the Cross, the emblem of man’s social, as well as spiritual redemption—the emblem of eternal, self-devoting love—the source, in every age, of such lofty inspirations and such heroic sacrifices? Will they dare to deny or dispute those social blessings which the Christian Church hath conferred on mankind? Those blessings, as I have said, formed no

direct, immediate object of the Christian dispensation; yet were they its necessary concomitants, in the same way as the angel, "who brings us a Heavenly message", is recognized by the brightness which shines round about him, and by the fragrance which he sheds from his wings. In the long series of ages which the Christian Church hath traversed, diffusing, like her Divine Founder, such manifold blessings in her course, she has had every species of obstacle to encounter. She had to contend with the pride, the self-will, the selfishness, and all the passions of our fallen nature. She had to contend with the ignorance and the weakness of the human understanding; she had to contend with the craft of the great adversary of God and man, who was ever raising up heresies to disfigure her, schisms to distract her, and tyrants to oppress her; who was ever sowing dissensions between her and the state, between nation and nation, between ruler and subject, between class and class, between race and race. And yet, in despite of these great and various obstacles, she renewed an effete civilization, enlightened barbarism, tamed the savage life. She everywhere overthrew the tyranny of the stronger, and flung her divine ægis over the weak. She ennobled and consolidated the family, by abolishing polygamy and divorce, and thus exalted woman to a rank she never attained to under any other religion. She took from paternity the savage right of life and death over the son, and first mitigated, and then abolished slavery—a social change, the most stupendous in the whole history of mankind—so stupendous, that ancient philosophy never dreamed of even proposing it. She sanctified poverty, the type of Him who had walked the Earth more homeless and destitute than the birds of the air and the foxes of the field; and, in the words of a great French Catholic writer of this age, "she taught kings themselves to wash the feet of the poor, and bow

down and do homage to the sovereignty of indigence". She inspired the peasant with a noble sense of independence, taught the burgess to unite the spirit of charity with the spirit of thriftiness, tempered the pride, and refined the manners of nobility, and by the beautiful institution of chivalry, breathed into it a generous self-devotion to all that was tender, weak, and helpless. By her prayers and unctions she consecrated royalty into a sort of temporal and secondary priesthood, holding up before it its duties as well as its rights. She humanized legislation, and infused the spirit of mercy into the stern dictates of justice. In her own admirable constitution she set up the model of the temperate, well-balanced mediæval monarchy—a monarchy which grew up under the shadow of her altar, and which declined only in those times, and in those countries, where her political influence declined. She created, as Montesquieu himself confesses, a new law of nations and a new right of warfare, adapted to her own enlarged spirit of benevolence, as well as to that brotherhood of nations she had founded in Europe. And the interpretation and the enforcement of this international law were consigned, by general consent and usage, to the Sovereign Pontiff, the common Father of Christendom. Her missions promoted geographical discovery; and the very propagation of the Gospel opened a boundless field to commercial enterprise. Then, in regard to the intellectual advancement of mankind, it were too long to commemorate the services of the Church. With the Bible in one hand, and her glorious history in the other, she opened out to poetry and to art new luminous spheres, impervious to classical and oriental antiquity. She has almost created the physical sciences; for between nature and nature's God she traced out a clear line of demarcation, unknown to paganism; while in her profound, well-connected

dogmas, speculative philosophy found an inexhaustible mine.

Such were the blessings, intellectual and social, the Catholic Church bestowed on a world too dull to appreciate, too ungrateful to acknowledge them. And many other benefits would she have conferred on mankind, had not her divine work of regeneration been partially interrupted by the religious schism of the sixteenth century.

To sum up, in conclusion, the religious and political doctrines of Freemasonry, the following observations may suffice: In its higher grades we have seen that it professes deism, and yet pretends to revive the patriarchal religion. How empty, how absurd is this pretension, I have, I trust, sufficiently shown.

In keeping with the hollowness of its doctrine, is the sham of its ceremonial. It surrounds itself with mock symbols taken from Judaism and from Christianity; and while it appeals to the wiser heathens, who presided over the mysteries of Isis and Eleusis, it apes some of their forms and ceremonies. Yet I venture to assert that a Pythagoras and a Plato would have evinced for this deistical system nearly as much contempt, as did the great Bossuet under the light of Christianity. Plato, indeed, might at times be guilty of culpable compliances with the practices of Polytheism, and might sanction in public what he condemned in private. But never would he have affirmed, that a religious system without public sacrifice, public worship, and a priesthood of any sort, could obtain a hold over the human mind.

Corresponding with the deistical principles of Freemasonry, was its shallow republicanism in politics.

The republic, though the experience of all ages has shown that it is not adapted for extensive empires, yet when based on historical traditions and national habits, allied with the Church, recognizing

the due subordination of ranks, and supported by those two pillars, aristocracy on the one hand, and municipal corporations on the other, the republic, I say, differs not so essentially and radically from the genuine monarchy, founded on the three estates.*

The Masonic republic aimed at the overthrow of monarchical, clerical, aristocratic, and popular rights, and sought the establishment of a sort of bureaucratic government, whereby the fraternity might safely propagate its religious and political principles, and monopolize all place and power. And in some countries the attempt had a partial and temporary success.

On the other hand, the political tenets of the Illuminati and the Jacobins were in close keeping with their monstrous doctrines in religion. As they implicitly rejected all truths by the denial of that great cardinal truth—the being of a God—on which all intellectual, moral, political, and physical life depends, their politics were a mere negation of social and domestic order, and substituted for settled rule the confusion of anarchy. In their bloody orgies of 1793, they seemed to celebrate the festival of annihilation herself; and the benign Providence who rules the world, appeared by an awful judgment to have for a moment suspended His course, and abandoned that world once more to chaos and old night.

These atheistic clubs have given place in our own age to Pantheistic sects, like the Saint Simonians, the Socialists, the Communists, and the Mazzinian portion of the Carbonari, who, amid the most fearful aberrations, have followed a sort of method, and in the very process of destruction, have attempted to build up.

Pantheism has been justly called the heresy of the nineteenth century. The sectaries I have named aim

* Yet even the best organized republic wants the element of cohesion, which royalty alone gives.

at establishing Pantheism in the Church, in the state, and in the family. In the Church, by denying the personality of God, by confounding Him with His creatures—by thus implicitly effacing the distinctions between right and wrong—by denying man's free will, and by asserting the law of fatalism in the universe. Into the state they introduce the Pantheistic system of emanations, by destroying all individual liberty, by making the citizen a passive instrument of the state, by repressing all personal spontaneity, by cramping all individual interests and individual affections, and consequently proscribing all hereditary rank, hereditary rights, hereditary property, and by contriving a constant flux and reflux of powers from the government to the people, and from the people to the government. They introduce Pantheism into the constitution of the family, by destroying personal freedom, and with it the very principle of property, and then by an execrable logic, by denying the unity, the sanctity, the inviolability of the nuptial tie; by rejecting here all settled alliances, all stability of affections and interests, all recognized connubial and parental claims: making by this horrid medley of folly and libertinism, the Pantheistic family a fit counterpart to the Pantheistic church and the Pantheistic state.

Such is the truly devilish skill, with which these sects have interwoven their doctrines on religious, political, and domestic society.

How they and their predecessors, the Illuminati and the Jacobins, grew out of Masonry, what has been their history and their moral and political influence, will be shown in the next lecture, which I shall have the honour of delivering before you.

APPENDIX,

Referred to in Page 18.

BRIEF EXPOSITION OF THE PRINCIPAL HEADS OF PAPAL LEGISLATION ON SECRET SOCIETIES.

1. THE whole legislation of the Church on the subject of the secret societies of modern ages is, so far as known to me, contained in the following documents—the Constitution of Clement the Twelfth, *In eminenti*, 1738; of Benedict the Fourteenth, *Providas*, 1751; of Pius the Seventh, *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo*, 1821; of Leo the Twelfth, *Quo graviora*, 1825. This last constitution contains *in extenso* the three preceding, and is found in the continuation of the *Bullarium Romanum*, tome xvi. p. 345, etc.; or in Heilig's edition of St. A. Liguori's *Moral Theology, Appendix, de R. Pontificum Decretis*. All these constitutions have been confirmed by our present Holy Father, Pius the Ninth, in the Encyclical, *Qui pluribus*, November 9, 1846, *Acta*, p. 11, 12. To these may be added the answers of the Sacred Penitentiary, November 8, 1821, to certain questions proposed by the Archbishop of Naples and other bishops of the Neapolitan kingdom. In reference to these documents, and the legislative enactments contained in them, the following questions may be raised:—

2. *First*.—What are the secret societies condemned in the aforesaid constitution? *Answer*. 1°.—The Freemasons are condemned by name in the constitutions of Clement and Benedict; the Freemasons and Carbonari in the constitution of Pius. 2°. Leo, besides renewing the constitutions of his predecessors, establishes certain specific marks, and condemns *all* secret societies whatsoever bearing those marks. See below, n. 5, 3°, and n. 7.

3. *Secondly*.—Has the Holy See designated any features in the constitution, end, or other adjuncts of these secret societies, as the grounds of condemnation; and, if so, what are they? *Answer*.—Several grounds are given, from which I select the following: 1°. The union of men of every or any sect or religious persuasion, and of men indifferent to all religion—heretics, deists, atheists, etc. (Mark, there is question throughout, not of public or otherwise open assemblies, as at our fairs, elections, etc., but of *secret* associations.) It is manifest, as the constitution of Benedict affirms, that such associations are highly dangerous to the purity of Catholic faith and morals. 2°. The dark, impenetrable veil of secrecy which, by the constitution of these societies, is thrown over all that passes at

their private meetings. 3°. The oath by which the bond of secrecy among the members is sealed. The authorities both in church and state have a right, which no oath of this kind can bar, to inquire and ascertain whether the proceedings of such secret associations are injurious to the welfare of the state or of religion. 4°. These societies bear an ill repute with wise and upright men, who look on those that join them as thereby tainted in character—tainted, of course, in Catholic eyes, and from a Catholic point of view. 5°. The oath taken by members of the higher orders in the societies, not to divulge their own secret transactions to members of the lower and less initiated grades.

4. As time rolled on, the true anti-Christian and anti-social tendency of the secret society system developed and displayed itself more unmistakeably and more fully. Hence, among the grounds of condemnation in the constitutions of 1821 and 1825, we have, 6°, their furious and Satanic hatred of the Vicar of Christ; 7°, their league of secret murder; 8°, their avowed atheism; 9°, their conspiracy against all legitimate authority, in the state as well as in the Church; etc., etc. These hideous and Hellish developments the Sovereign Pontiff affirms were made known to him from the most authentic sources of information.

5. *Thirdly*.—What are the ecclesiastical censures incurred by the aforesaid constitutions; and by whom are they incurred? *Answer*.—The greater excommunication is *ipso facto* incurred; 1°, by Freemasons; 2°, by Carbonari; 3°, by the members of any secret society, under whatsoever name it may exist, wheresoever or whensoever it may exist, which is, like that of the Carbonari, leagued against the Church *and* the supreme temporal authority; 4°, by all who, under any pretext or excuse whatsoever, enrol themselves in such societies, or propagate or promote them, or are present at any of their meetings, or give them any help or favour, whether openly or secretly, directly or indirectly, etc., etc.

6. *Fourthly*.—From what has just been said, it is evident that many forms of secret societies may exist, whose members do not incur the above excommunication. In fact this censure is only incurred by Freemasons, Carbonari, members of secret societies organized against *both* the state and the Church, and the abettors, etc., of the same. Hence a question arises, are other secret societies, not coming under any of these denominations, though not excommunicated in their members, nevertheless condemned by the aforesaid Papal constitutions? *Answer*.—1°. It is plain that any secret society, in which any *one* of the marks enumerated above, n. 3, 4, is found, comes, at least by implication and virtually, under the ban of the Papal condemnation. For it is manifest that these marks are not evil because reprobated, but reprobated because evil—evil, as being in themselves and intrinsically immoral; or evil, as being in themselves or in the circumstances fraught with

imminent danger to faith or morals, or both. Hence all secret societies, the members of which are pledged by oath, as above, n. 4, are evil, on account of the danger (*supposing* no other evil element) of unsound doctrine or immoral principles creeping in and extending—the lawful authority, whether civil or ecclesiastical, being all the while kept in utter ignorance of the growing disorder, and therefore unable to apply efficient remedies to check and extinguish it. Hence, also, all secret societies combined against the legitimate supreme civil authority are evil, because this object is not merely in itself dangerous but sinful. 2°. It is equally plain that any secret society, whose end, means, etc., are in opposition to any law of God or of the Church, whether coming under the description of the secret societies condemned by the Popes or not, is, by the very fact, under the ban of the Church.

7. I subjoin a few sentences from the *Papal Constitutions* :—

“Inter gravissimas præfatæ prohibitionis et damnationis causas . . . una est, quod in hujusmodi societatibus et conventiculis cujuscunque religionis ac sectæ homines invicem consociantur . . . Alterum est arctum et impervium secreti foedus, quo occultantur ea quæ in hujusmodi conventiculis fiunt . . . Tertia est jusjurandum quo se hujusmodi secreto inviolabiliter servando adstringunt: quasi liceat alicui cujuslibet promissionis aut juramenti obtentu se tueri, quominus a legitima potestate interrogatus omnia fateri teneatur quæcumquæ exquiruntur ad dignoscendum an aliquid in hujusmodi conventibus fiat, quod sit contra religionis aut reipublicæ statum et leges Ultima demum, quod apud prudentes et probos viros eadem societates et aggregationes male audirent, eorumque judicio quicumque eisdem nomina darent, pravitatis et perversionis notam incurrerent”.—BENEDICT XIV.

“Societates occultas omnes, tam quæ nunc sunt, quam quæ fortasse deinceps erumpent, et quæ ea sibi adversus ecclesiam et supremas civiles potestates proponunt quæ superius commemoravimus, quocumque tandem nomine appellentur, nos perpetuo prohibemus sub eisdem poenis, quæ continentur prædecessorum nostrorum litteris in hac nostra constitutione jam allatis, quas expresse confirmamus”.—LEO XII.

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June 16, 1862.